



Dr Marisa Paterson MLA

Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services
Minister for Women
Minister for the Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence
Minister for Corrections
Minister for Gaming Reform

Member for Murrumbidgee

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

Our ref: PRO24/3909

Dear Mr Duncan

Thank you for your letter of 3 September 2024, regarding the petition E-PET-032-24. The petition requests the Assembly to call on the Government to:

- a. Ensure Police are adequately resourced;
- b. Ensure the DPP is adequately resourced so Police are confident in referring cases to them;
- c. Pursue law reform and work towards identifying and implementing novel ways to intervene with youth offenders which promote the safety and well-being of the whole community;
- d. Install cameras in a number of key locations where youth crime is known to occur; and
- e. Ensure that all youth offenders and their families are required to be assessed by ACT Child and Youth Protection Services including when provided with a caution.

Pursuant to Standing Order 100, this letter constitutes my response.

Crime and Incident Statistics at Kaleen and Giralang

Data from ACT Policing reflects increased incidents reported in both Kaleen and Giralang from 2022 and 2023. This increase indicates that people are willing to come forward to report matters to ACT Policing. Incidents reported to police include reports from any source including police operations and cover a wide range of behaviour or issues, which may or may not be criminal.

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- ACT Policing has observed that incidents reported in Kaleen have increased by 9.3 per cent, with 896 incidents reported in 2022 and 979 incidents reported in 2023. Between 1 January to 31 August 2024, there has been 556 incidents in Kaleen reported to ACT Policing, this compares with 630 incidents reported in the same period in 2023.
- ACT Policing has observed that incidents reported in Giralang have increased by 29.6 per cent, with 287 incidents reported in 2022 and 372 incidents reported in 2023. Between 1 January to 31 August 2024, there has been 236 incidents in Giralang reported to ACT Policing, this compares with 249 incidents reported in the same period in 2023.

The PROMIS database is a live system which is updated on a daily basis, therefore data extracted is subject to slight change dependent on the date of extraction. The data in this report was extracted and accurate as at 24 September 2024.

*An **incident** includes reports made to police from any source (operations, front desk, online reporting etc.) recorded in PROMIS, where a criminal offence may or may not have occurred. This term also encompasses pro-active police activity recorded in PROMIS, including random breath testing, criminal targeting operations etc. where a criminal offence may or may not have occurred.*

In terms of offences reported, ACT Policing data shows the offences reported for Kaleen have increased year on year, while in Giralang, this has decreased.

- Regarding the perception of an increased crime trend in the suburb of Kaleen, ACT Policing advises that offences reported for Kaleen have increased by 6.2 per cent, with 354 offences reported in 2022 and 376 offences in 2023.

Number of offences reported to ACT Policing – Kaleen

Source: PROMIS database as at 24 September 2024

Offence	2022	2023	2024 (1 January - 31 August)
Assault	29	40	13
Sexual offences	3	8	4
Other offences against the person	5	5	1
Robbery	4	5	0
Burglary	16	28	12
Stolen Motor vehicle	19	22	10
Theft (excl motor vehicle theft)	71	83	47
Property damage	45	68	20
Other offences against property	22	18	4
Government security/operations	1	0	0
Justice procedures	23	36	23
Firearms and weapons	15	2	4

Other offences against good order	8	12	10
Drug offences	9	7	3
Traffic Offences	84	41	25
Other offences n.e.c.	0	1	1
Total	354	376	177

- Regarding the perception of an increased crime trend in the suburb of Giralang, ACT Policing advises that offences reported for Giralang have **decreased by 27.1 per cent**, with 170 offences reported in 2022 and 124 offences in 2023.

Number of offences reported to ACT Policing – Giralang

Source: PROMIS database as at 24 September 2024

Offence	2022	2023	2024 (1 January - 31 August)
Assault	14	12	7
Sexual offences	1	0	0
Other offences against the person	3	2	2
Robbery	0	1	0
Burglary	11	6	4
Stolen Motor vehicle	4	6	5
Theft (excl motor vehicle theft)	23	21	11
Property damage	12	30	12
Other offences against property	61	7	0
Government security/operations	0	0	1
Justice procedures	14	6	14
Firearms and weapons	1	2	2
Other offences against good order	3	3	2
Drug offences	1	2	0
Traffic Offences	22	26	18
Other offences n.e.c.	0	0	0
Total	170	124	78

On a year-on-year comparison in 2022 and 2023, the decrease in the offences reported in Giralang is consistent with an overall decrease in offences reported in the Belconnen patrol zone which Kaleen and Giralang are within. Offences reported within the Belconnen patrol zone totalled 6,682 in 2022, and 6,159 offences reported in 2023. The decreasing trend is also consistent with the offences reported across the ACT, offences reported in 2022 were 28,997 compared with 28,000 offences reported in 2023.

*One or more **offences** are recorded against an incident when credible criminal activity is reported to, or becomes known to ACT Police. To be classed as an offence:*

- *The circumstances as reported or detected amount to a crime defined by law and fall within the jurisdiction of the police agency; and*
- *There isn't credible evidence to the contrary.*

Police Actions in Kaleen and Giralang

ACT Policing, specifically Belconnen Station General Duties patrols, routinely conduct proactive policing in all Belconnen suburbs of the ACT, including Kaleen and Giralang. ACT Policing also respond where reports of criminal behaviour are received, including drug-related incidents. In response to information reports submitted to ACT Policing and to address concerns raised by the Kaleen and Giralang community, ACT Policing executed several search warrants related to drug dealing in 2024.

A large component of ACT Policing's crime reduction strategy is engagement with the community and Community Interest Groups. In June 2024, senior members from ACT Policing and a representative from Neighbourhood Watch held a community engagement event with the residents of Kaleen and Giralang. The community raised their concerns in this forum and members from ACT Policing spoke candidly about staffing, the priority dispatch model, as well as general safety information. In July 2024, ACT Policing attended Kaleen Plaza and hosted Cop Pop-Up, a community engagement initiative that enables community members to meet some of their local police officers and ask any questions they might have about policing, community safety and crime prevention.

ACT Policing also works with partner support agencies and other areas of government, such as Housing ACT to identify issues of concern and social issues that often underpin anti-social behaviour and collaborate on appropriate responses.

Response to Youth Crime and Youth Offenders

The ACT Government has considered the concerns of the residents in Kaleen and Giralang regarding their concerns about youth crime and offending. Evidence based research demonstrates children and young people engaging in harmful conduct or youth offending behaviours, or at risk of engaging in harmful conduct and youth offending behaviours, often have complex underlying and unmet therapeutic needs requiring coordinated trauma-informed and holistic supports and services.

By addressing the underlying therapeutic needs of children and young people engaging in harmful conduct or youth offending behaviours, the risk of their behaviours continuing are expected to decrease, their social and health outcomes will improve, and the community will be safer.

Instead of being assessed by the Child and Youth Protection Services, as suggested by the petition, children and young people who engage in harmful conduct or youth offending behaviours or at risk of engaging in harmful conduct can now be referred to the Therapeutic Support Panel for Children and Young People (the Panel) for assessment and coordination of their underlying therapeutic needs.

The Panel is a multi-disciplinary panel of experts in identifying and assessing the therapeutic needs of children, young people and their families. The Panel provides voluntary services to referred children, young people and their families by assessing their therapeutic needs and coordinating supports and services via a therapy plan and brokerage provided by the ACT Government.

The Panel is part of the ACT Government's reform to change the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility (MACR) from 10 to 12 years of age. A further increase to 14 years of age will commence in July 2025. ACT Policing also supports measures to divert young people from the criminal justice system and where appropriate, young people will be provided with support options rather than the laying of charges. When considering appropriate pathways for young offenders involved in an incident, ACT Policing considers the MACR and channels young offenders appropriately, including referrals to the Panel.

ACT Policing has four dedicated Youth Liaison Officers (YLO) within the Community Engagement Team of the Vulnerable Persons portfolio. YLOs seek to disrupt dangerous or criminal behaviours among at risk young people by working with partner agencies like Child, Youth and Families, and Canberra Police Community Youth Club (CPCYC) to reduce police contact with these young people through increasing their involvement with voluntary support programs.

The YLOs attend monthly case management meetings with Child, Youth and Families and fortnightly Recidivist Offender Multi-Agency Round Table meetings with representatives from relevant ACT Government agencies and organisations. They also engage at risk young people personally, reminding them to be responsible for their actions, and consequences for their behaviour.

Besides the MACR Reforms, the ACT Government also supports measures to divert young people from the criminal justice system. ACT Policing provide an annual grant to the CPCYC to deliver the Project 180 (P180) Program, a diversion program for young people 12-16 years of age who are identified as being at risk. The Justice and Community Safety (JACS) Directorate also provided \$300,000 to the CPCYC from the Crime Prevention Budget over financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24 to increase CPCYC's capacity to intake 10 more young people into the P180 Program. In FY2023-24 JACS also funded \$20,000 to subsidise young people at risk to play sports through a grant to EveryChance. Another \$30,000 grant was provided to CrimeStoppers for a youth engagement campaign to encourage them to report crime.

The Public Safety CCTV Network (CCTV Network) is administered by the Security and Emergency Management Division (SEMD) within JACS, and is located across key shopping centres, transport interchanges, public open spaces and major venues in the ACT.

In the 2023-24 Budget Review, the ACT Government agreed to provide JACS with \$207,000 in capital funding and \$417,000 in expense funding over four years from 2023-24 to replace 10 solar-powered CCTV cameras within the Public Safety CCTV Network (CCTV Network) with new models that provide enhanced video quality. Replacement of these 10 solar-powered CCTV cameras is due to be completed by mid-2025 and provide opportunities for re-deployment to suitable locations to support safer spaces and events across the ACT.

There are no immediate plans to expand the CCTV Network within the ACT. However, when planning for future CCTV deployments and re-deployments across Canberra, consultation occurs with ACT Policing in relation to public safety risk, crime trends and resource availability.

Resourcing of ACT Policing and the DPP

The ACT Government notes the concerns of petitioners regarding resourcing of the ACT Policing and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution.

To provide some context, ACT Policing allocates their resources in various ways when it comes to responding to incidents and crime in the community. Besides community engagement, ACT Policing's Intelligence Team analyses a variety of information sources to identify patterns, convergences, and prioritisation to maximise crime reduction opportunities and increase community safety. The intelligence informs target areas for police patrols.

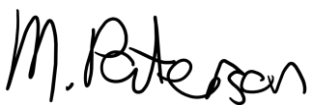
Canberra's condensed geographical nature means that officers can move across the territory in a timely manner, with police regularly undertaking duties in different patrol zones if the resources are required. In addition to those located at the Belconnen Police Station, ACT Policing's dispatch system ensures the closest and most available resources will be allocated to incidents. Police response time and resourcing are based on all other operational priorities occurring at the time.

In June 2023, the ACT Government committed to enhance community safety by investing more than \$107 million in the recruitment of additional 126 ACT Policing personnel for the next five years. This is the largest single investment ever made in ACT Policing in terms of staffing and funding boost. All areas of ACT Policing will see an increase in numbers with priority areas receiving assistance as soon as possible. The funding will allow an additional dedicated ACT Policing recruit class to be run each year for the next five years. In addition, the Labor party has committed to increase ACT Policing's resources to 150 police officers to 2029, an increase of 24 police officers beyond the current commitment.

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and ACT Policing continues to engage with the ACT Government regarding its resourcing needs.

I trust this information provides the petitioners with assurance that their concerns are understood, have been acknowledged by the ACT Government and efforts are being made by Government and ACT Policing to address these issues.

Yours sincerely



Dr Marisa Paterson MLA
Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services

28 November 2024