



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
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Mr Duncan *Tom*

Thank you for your letter of 11 November 2021 regarding petition number 45-21, lodged by Ms Giulia Jones MLA on behalf of the petitioners regarding crime prevention at the Ajijo Grocery and Convenience Store in Coombs. This letter is my response, pursuant to Standing Order 100.

The ACT Government notes the petitioners' concerns regarding:

Visible and regular police presence in the vicinity of the Ajijo Grocery and Convenience Store

ACT Policing's highest 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 does not discriminate; it 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 in Molonglo. The Officer in Charge of Woden Police Station attended several local events throughout 2020 and 2021 to proactively engage with the Molonglo region and will continue to do so as COVID-19 restrictions allow. Target areas for patrolling are based on intelligence drawn from a number of sources – including community involvement and engagement directly with ACT Policing. ACT

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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 Chief Police Officer for the ACT has acknowledged publicly that, as Molonglo continues to grow in population, ACT Policing expects there to be an increase in reportable crime. Population growth is a contributing factor to increases in crime in any area.

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 area surrounding the Coombs Shopping Centre and officers will continue to work with the building owner and tenant to share the responsibility of ensuring 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.

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 if resources are required. ACT Policing has access to many resources to respond to incidents in Molonglo, in addition to those located at Woden Police Station, and its 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 front-line police officers and that ACT Policing has the resources necessary to keep our community safe. It may reassure petitioners to know that the ACT Government's investment of \$33.9 million over four years towards a new PSM is delivering more than 60 new ACT Policing personnel – the first step towards a more visible, proactive and connected police service. In 2022, additional ACT Policing recruitment will expand proactive, prevention-focused policing and drive a more mobile, targeted policing presence connected to the needs of the community. ACT Policing is recruiting a further ten staff for PSM roles including an additional Proactive Policing Team of nine sworn members and an

additional unsworn Aboriginal Liaison Officer. In 2022-23, ACT Policing intends to further expand frontline proactive policing presence, improve community engagement and expand multidisciplinary vulnerable people capability through additional recruitment.

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

8/21/2022