



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

QTON No. 20

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

JEREMY HANSON CSC MLA (CHAIR), MARISA PATERSON MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), JO CLAY MLA

Inquiry into referred 2019–20 Annual and Financial Reports and Budget Estimates 2020-21
ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE
25 FEBRUARY 2021

Asked by Mr Jeremy Hanson MLA on 25 February 2021. Deputy Chief Police Officer of ACT Policing, Commander Michael Chew took on notice the following question(s):

THE CHAIR: On the issue of road safety, roadside random drug testing and alcohol testing, how is that going at the moment? Has it been affected by COVID?

Dep Commissioner Gaughan: It was, because we were not doing any through a fairly significant period of time because of the concerns about potential transmission to the officers. We basically stopped it, but we are back up again. I think that our overall hit rate—Mick might have the stats there—in relation to drug testing is pretty consistent and has been for a number of years. I think that we are pretty much spiking back up. I might leave it to the deputy to provide the stats.

Cmdr Chew: Thanks, CPO. Yes, it has been relatively consistent over the last five years, around the 1.1, 1.2 per cent of tests—persons charged per number of tests completed. For last year, it cracked up to—the last six months of last year it cranked up to 1.9 per cent again.

THE CHAIR: Is that drugs or is that alcohol?

Cmdr Chew: That is drugs.

THE CHAIR: That is drugs.

Cmdr Chew: Sorry, that is alcohol. In relation to drug driving, the proportion of tests to persons charged has been relatively consistent, around 20 to 25 per cent. In the last six months of last year, it jumped to 29.5 per cent.

THE CHAIR: So we are either flatlining or going up. What are we doing to try and send a message that it is unacceptable, because that number does not seem to be decreasing?

Cmdr Chew: It certainly comes back to the piece that the CPO has talked about— about education and identifying to the community the possible outcomes of driving when impaired or driving when distracted. The possible outcome is that you kill yourself or you kill someone else on the road. Again, it is that education process. It is about using intelligence, having the community provide that information to us and then building a picture of those particular locations within Canberra that may have a higher proportion of drug driving than other areas in Canberra.

THE CHAIR: That has increased to 29 per cent. Can you break down what those drugs were? Was it cannabis or methamphetamine or opioids?

Cmdr Chew: For the same period of that 29 per cent, of the number of tests—



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THE CHAIR: Maybe you can take it on notice. I am after a breakdown of the increase and what the increase is in. Is there a particular drug that is prevalent or is it that across the board we are seeing a decrease in opioid, an increase in cannabis or vice versa? What is happening there?

Cmdr Chew: For the same period of that 29 per cent, 84 related to THC only—that is the active ingredient in cannabis—which is a 29 per cent increase over the previous year. Ninety-nine related to a combination of THC and methamphetamine, which was a decrease of 20 per cent. Six returned a combination of THC and MDMA, which was a 108 per cent increase. Five of those tests were a combination of all three, so meth, MDMA and THC, which was down 28 per cent. What we are seeing is a combination of drugs probably becoming more prevalent, but predominantly around methamphetamine and the cannabis THC.

THE CHAIR: Brilliant. If you could just give me that on notice as well, please

Chris Steel MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:—

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% change 18-19 to 19-20	Jul 2020 – Dec 2020
Persons charged with Drink Driving	1049	1121	876	↓21.9%	505
Random Breath Tests Conducted	89,300	97,885	54,991	↓ 44%	27,021
Proportion of tests to persons charged	1.2%	1.1%	1.6%	-	1.9%
Persons charged with Drug Driving	824	1041	874	↓22%	450
Random Drug Tests conducted	3895	3541	3264	↓ 8%	1523
Positive Roadside Drug Tests	757	930	811	↓13%	381
Proportion of tests to persons charged	21.2%	29.4%	26.8%	-	29.5%

- The below outlines the breakdown of positive oral fluid analysis drug tests over the past three financial years.

Drug Type	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Jul 2020 – Dec 2020
THC all	379	409	395	194
THC only	153	113	147	84
THC/Meth	211	272	218	99
THC/MDMA	13	16	25	6
THC/MDMA/Meth	2	8	5	5
Meth only	357	494	387	170
MDMA only	10	10	12	3
Meth/MDMA	11	17	17	14
Total	757	930	811	381

- A further 235 positive drug results were recorded in 2019-20 from other circumstances such as; where a driver is involved in a vehicle collision, are taken to hospital, and had a



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mandatory sample of their blood taken. Should there be sufficient evidence to identify them as a driver they would also be charged for drug driving.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Chris Steel".

Date:

5/3/21

By the acting Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Chris Steel MLA