



## Chief Police Officer for the ACT

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The Chair  
Select Committee on Estimates 2013-14  
Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory



Dear Chair

I am writing to you to clarify information that I provided during my appearance at the Estimates Hearing for ACT Policing on 19 June 2013. In particular, I wish to provide more detail around the timings and procedures followed by ACT Policing in response to a death in Kambah on 18 March 2013.

A brief chronology of ACT Policing's involvement is as follows:

### 18 March 2013

- 09:45 - ACT Policing members attended and secured the scene.
- 10:15 - Operations Sergeant notified that the death was considered suspicious.
- 11:00 - Supportlink members arrived to support family members and others present.
- 11:05 - ACT Policing Criminal Investigation and AFP Forensic members arrived and commenced preliminary inquiries.
- 12:00 - Records of Conversation with family and others present began.
- 12:30-13:00 - AFP Criminal Investigations members confirmed a warrant was required to enable further investigations of the crime scene, including forensic examinations.
- 14:00 - ACT Policing Homicide Team began preparing an affidavit for a search warrant using information obtained by the investigation already under way.
- 16:10 - Draft affidavit and search warrant completed and internal vetting finalised.
- 17:25 - Search Warrant sworn by Magistrate Peter Morrison.
- 18:10 - Search warrant commences at residence; AFP Forensic members began processing the crime scene.
- 22:45 - Body of deceased removed and escorted to the Phillip Forensic Medical Centre facility.

ACT Policing members arrived at the residence at 9:45am and immediately cordoned the area as a crime scene. The deceased person in this matter appeared to be the sole occupier of the premises and the circumstances of her death were initially regarded as suspicious. As such, investigating members sought to obtain a search warrant under section 194 of the *Crimes Act 1900* to enable further investigative and forensic processes to commence at the premises under the auspices of investigating a potential homicide. This was necessary to ensure that any evidence captured by police would be admissible in any future court processes.

ACT Policing members controlled the scene from their initial attendance. I am advised that specific steps were taken to ensure that the body of the deceased was not in view of the media in attendance or visible to public view.

A search warrant was subsequently issued at 5:25pm with the body of the deceased remaining at the scene until 10:45pm that same day. The search warrant was executed (completed) at 4:30pm on 19 March 2013 following the completion of extensive forensic and investigative examinations at the scene noting that the matter was still being treated as a potential homicide.

During ACT Policing's response to this incident, attending members took concerted action to minimise distress to the family of the deceased and to protect the dignity of the deceased under the circumstances. In addition, members ensured that family members were kept informed of the necessary and protracted investigative procedures that needed to be followed in the circumstances.

I empathise with concerns about the time the body of the deceased remained in situ while police investigations were being conducted. As advised during my Estimates evidence, ACT Policing will hold further discussions with the Justice and Community Safety Directorate to determine whether this case has identified opportunities to improve legislative, procedural or other supporting arrangements for dealing with crime scene and coronial matters.

Yours sincerely



David Pryce  
Performing the duties of Chief Police Officer