



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

JACS QToN No. 4

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY  
Mr Peter Cain MLA (Chair), Dr Marisa Paterson MLA (Deputy Chair),  
Mr Andrew Braddock MLA

**Inquiry into Penalties for minor offences and vulnerable people**  
**ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**  
**21 June 2023**

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Asked by MR CAIN on 21 JUNE 2023: ACT POLICING took on notice the following question:

[Ref: Hansard Uncorrected Proof Transcript 21 June 2023 page 27]

In relation to: Education programs

MR CAIN: Thank you. I note on page 7 of your submission you say, "ACT Policing believe adequate education, diversion and support services for parents will assist in maximising compliance of legislation." I am particularly interested in the education programs and how they operate within our schooling system or as within community groups the effectiveness of those and whether there is value in increasing that interaction.

ACT POLICING: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:—

ACT Policing delivers a range of programs to both educate and support Canberra's young people. ACT Policing has four dedicated Youth Liaison Officer (YLO) roles within the Community Engagement Team of the Vulnerable Persons & Proactive Policing portfolio.

Through the YLO capability and broader community policing functions, ACT Policing works closely with the ACT Education Directorate to provide safety-themed education programs and resources. YLO's are deployed to engage with young people and schools on a referral basis, in relation to criminal conduct, anti-social behaviour and other significant issues effecting their lives, and those of their peers, friends, teachers and families.

ACT Policing has a dedicated Education Liaison Officer (ELO) role within the Education & Diversion Team of the Vulnerable Persons & Proactive Policing portfolio.

Through the ELO capability and broader community policing functions, ACT Policing works closely with the ACT Education Directorate, Catholic Education and Independent Education to deliver the ThinkUKnow Program (online safety) program.

The ThinkUKnow Program was significantly curtailed throughout the COVID-19 pandemic given the rapid transition to home schooling and limitations around access to schools, however it has resumed in earnest from Term 2 2022.

## OFFICIAL

In the 2021-22 financial year, a total of 30 presentations were delivered to a total of 1,431 students in the ACT.

Delivery of this program was suspended in August 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic before resuming in June 2022. Since recommencing presentations on 22 June 2022, 45 presentations to over 3,100 students have been delivered.

ACT Policing's YLOs also partner with Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS) to hold monthly Case Management meetings to discuss 'at risk' young people who have come to the attention of youth services, youth agencies and police and develop coordinated responses to their needs.

ACT Policing provides an annual grant to the Canberra Police and Citizens Youth Club (PCYC), specifically to deliver the Project 180 Program; a full-time alternative education program for 12 to 16 year-old youths having been identified as at risk. The Canberra PCYC received \$460,920 (GST excluded) from ACT Policing to contribute to the delivery of these youth-at-risk programs aimed at creating healthier and safer pathways for young people.

YLOs also regularly attend PCYC to engage with young people with the aim of breaking down barriers between police and young people and normalising the uniform.

ACT Policing has continued to support organisations such as Menslink and PCYC to deliver community-based programs to vulnerable groups.

In 2021-22 Financial Year ACT Policing contributed \$100,000 (GST excluded) to Menslink to continue supporting young men in the Canberra region through provision of free counselling, volunteer mentoring, and education programs.

ACT Policing's Constable Kenny Koala program is designed to educate children aged between three to 12 years on a range of safety themes, and to encourage them to turn to police for help and advice.

Constable Kenny has been a visible figure in the ACT for more than 30 years and is a popular 'trusted' character used to address several safety issues, including teaching children how to 'Stay Ok' — how they can make the right choices and recognise that there are consequences associated with the decisions they make.

In the 2021-22 Financial Year Constable Kenny made 890 classroom presentations visiting more than 20,924 students.

All of the above programs are key to building strong relationships between police and young persons, as well as their educational and deterrence value for those vulnerable and impressionable young persons. There is a lot of value in increasing the programs provided by police to allow more vulnerable children the necessary early engagement we know is vital to their future direction and choices in life.

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

Signature:



Date: 29.06.2023

EXECUTIVE GENERAL MANAGER - CORPORATE, ACT POLICING, PETER HOWELL