



STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr Jeremy Hanson MLA (Chair), Dr Marisa Paterson MLA (Deputy Chair),
Ms Jo Clay MLA

Inquiry into ACT Budget 2021–22
ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE
28 October 2021

Asked by Jeremy Hanson MLA on 28 October 2021: Shane Rattenbury MLA took on notice the following question(s):

[Ref: Hansard Transcript 28 October 2021 [PAGE 27-28]]

In relation to:

THE CHAIR: Thanks, Mr Cain. And my question—probably best directed to Mr Glenn. But I am just interested in—not the sort of front of house staff or, you know, the emergency services and others that fit within the directorate, but the policy staff, the people in the directorate dealing with policy. Broadly, how many staff are sort of in the office to do that body of work or the policy work for JACS?

Mr Glenn: In the office, Mr Hanson?

THE CHAIR: Well, not necessarily—by saying in the office—and that is where I am going to be heading. But how many staff are there?

Mr Glenn: In terms of actual numbers?

THE CHAIR: Yes, yes. You know, once you take out, you know, the emergency services and the police and the gaol and everyone else—

Mr Glenn: Sure.

THE CHAIR: —how many are actually doing the sort of—well, you know, and not the courts, but the back of house policy work of the directorate. How many staff are there?

Mr Glenn: Mr Hanson, I might just need to see—I wonder if Ms Beattie has the staffing numbers directly to hand. It is a—

THE CHAIR: I am happy if it gets taken on notice for a precise number. I am just after a sort of—a view of what that number is in broad terms.

Ms Beattie: Liz Beattie, chief human resources officer at the directorate. I will have to take that on notice because we would have to actually break down—while we have a rough—the table indicates where they work. I would have to just put a little bit of consideration whether they were front line or not, Mr Hanson.

THE CHAIR: Yes. Yes, okay, thanks. And are those staff located in the main in the government office building on London Circuit or they sort of spread across the board?

Ms Beattie: They are spread. They are spread out. There is some in 220. There is some in 2 Constitution Avenue. There is some currently in Customs House. So there is a range of actual ...(indistinct)... [10.23.36] that they are.

THE CHAIR: Right. And is that because there is not enough room in the government office building or is there a functional reason for that?

Mr Glenn: That is mostly functional, Mr Hanson. So the legal policy engine within the directorate, which Mr Ng heads up, is predominantly located within the 220 London Circuit within the city office block. There are other policy staff that are attached to other business units within JACS who work in areas where those business units work.

For example, there are some policy people in the Human Rights Commission who are working from Customs House at the moment. There are policy people in Corrections who are mostly in 2 Constitution Avenue. So it actually goes to the functional disposition of the organisation.

THE CHAIR: Okay. And as we all return to work, is there a sort of consolidated JACS plan or is that being left to each functional area to determine the working arrangements? You know, whether people work from home or whether they are in the office. Who is making those sort of decisions? Broad guidelines or is that ...(indistinct)... [10.24.42]

Mr Glenn: There are broad guidelines to the effect that people who have operational or other pressing business needs to be in the office would be returning to the office, many of whom have been working from offices throughout the entire COVID period because of their particular roles.

For those who have been working from home, there would be a gradual return to work determined by the business needs and the safety needs and other needs of those staff members. Within that broad setting, I have asked each business unit to address their own transition plan, which is ultimately approved or not by the senior management committee of the directorate, which consists of myself and the Deputy Directors-General and the chief operating officer.

THE CHAIR: Right. And—

Mr Glenn: Sorry.

THE CHAIR: In 220 London Circuit, are your staff going to be hot desking?

Mr Glenn: There is a system to book particular desks within 220 London Circuit and people would occupy that desk for the entire day. So it is less flexible than perhaps it would be in a non-COVID environment where people could move through the day to different places in order to be able to locate with other people that they are working on at that particular moment.

So we do ask people to book a particular desk so that we can manage the load of people across the building and the hygiene measures that are put in place to be able to ensure a safe workplace.

THE CHAIR: Right. And I am just wondering culturally if, you know, COVID has changed the view in terms of work practices as to whether you are going to be, you know, introducing more working from home regardless of COVID or not. Whether you see that as an ongoing arrangement or your desire is to get everyone back in the office when it is safe to do so.

Mr Glenn: I think, like many workplaces, COVID is affecting some changes that I expect will be permanent and there will be greater flexibility for people working from home. I would expect in the longer term as the COVID situation eases, we would have fewer people who work exclusively from home.

But I expect there will be a mix for many of our staff, particularly policy staff, and that is a flexibility that the ACT public service as a whole is seeking to pursue. We can see now the technology that supports that and some of the flexible buildings that support that as well.

That said, there will always be areas of the business where physical attendance is necessary, particularly in the front line areas, but, you know, for today's purposes, the courts, for example, will always require a reasonably large cohort of people to be physically located in the court with the judicial officers to support that activity.

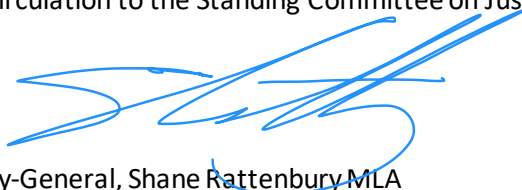
Shane Rattenbury MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:—

The Directorate has around 70 officers who work exclusively or predominantly in policy roles. This includes around 50 in the Legislation, Policy and Programs Division, and around 20 from across other business units. Fifty seven of these policy officers are based in 220 London Circuit. The others work in business units located across Canberra.

Many other Directorate officers who are involved predominantly in program delivery or corporate support also have a policy dimension to their work.

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

Signature:



Date:

7/11/21

By the Attorney-General, Shane Rattenbury MLA