



## Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety

### Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2021-2022 ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

Asked by Mr Jeremy Hanson MLA] on 01 November 2022: Deputy Commissioner Gaughan took on notice the following question(s):

Reference: Hansard [uncorrected] proof transcript 01 November 22 [PAGE 22]

In relation to:

**Mr Gaughan:** Yes, I will get—I am sure the DCPO will have a comment on this as well. But I think there is probably—what is not articulate in the Annual Reports was a fairly substantial change that occurred around—in that interim period in relation to the workforce.

So two areas were, for one of a better word, civilianised. Where we moved from a staff profile where we primarily had sworn police officers operating in those two areas to a staff profile where we now have primarily non-police officers in those two areas. And those two areas are police communications, our police operation centre, where the vast majority of people in police communications are no longer police officers.

Certainly the two senior officers are police officers. But the vast majority of people in there at the moment are professional staff members who undergo a substantial training regime to actually get them in a position that they can take calls and they can dispatch calls. So they are actually on the radio, very professional, that is their fulltime career.

What that enabled us to do was then shift those police officers that were in that communication centre to frontline services, which was a better use of operational police—

**MR HANSON:** What is that number, do you know off the top of your head?

**Mr Gaughan:** It is well over 100. We will have to give you the exact number. but it is well over 100.

The other area where we moved to a primarily civilian—or probably a 50 per cent civilian workforce, was our intelligence area. For the same—for the primary reason that we found that the best candidates for intelligence were people that had been professionally trained through universities in relation to that particular activity. And a lot of them come from the intelligence services across the lake. Where we ingest them into our organisation, and they are a better fit for us than sworn police officers.

So those two areas—and again, we will have to take on notice, Chair, the exact number that transferred through. It has seen a fairly substantial shift in sworn police from what was traditionally an area that we would have police officers in. And that is consistent with what takes place in pretty—well, as far as I am aware, every jurisdiction, particularly on the east coast.

**Mick Gentleman MLA:** The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

The legacy shift of sworn police resources out of ACT Policing Communications occurred around 2000-2001. Prior to this change the balance of resources was 97 per cent sworn police to 3 per cent unsworn professional staff. While the overall size of ACT Policing Communications has increased over the years, the balance of resources in the ACT Communications Centre has remained relatively steady, ranging between 30-35 per cent sworn police and 65-70 per cent unsworn professional resources since the initial change occurred in 2000-2001.

The shift of resources in Intelligence has occurred more gradually over time. In 2001 the balance in Intelligence was approximately 87 per cent sworn police and 13 per cent unsworn professionals and in 2022 the balance is approximately 58 per cent sworn police and 42 per cent unsworn professionals.

In both areas, the changes have been driven by ongoing policy decisions to recruit unsworn professionals rather than sworn police into certain operational support roles to better support the operational uplift of frontline policing in the ACT.

The 702 in 2011-12 and 691 in 2021-22 are figures based on headcount as at 30 June of those years. As ACT Policing's numbers fluctuate throughout the year relative to the number of transfers to AFP National and recruit commencement in ACT Policing, using average FTE figures provides a more accurate comparison of police numbers:

YEAR	POLICE HEADCOUNT AS AT 30 JUNE	POLICE FINANCIAL YEAR AVERAGE FTE
2011-12	702	668.7
2021-22	691	677.51

There are a number of factors that contribute to the perception that sworn police numbers have not increased in ACT Policing over the past 10 years. The main factor is the transfer of 47 police FTE in 2015-16 to the Specialist Response Group (SRG) and Canine functions of AFP National. Additionally, in 2020-21 the ACT Watch House replaced police with 12 Protective Service Officer (PSO) positions.

The overall FTE staffing level in ACT Policing has increased by approximately 55 police, 13 PSOs and 39 unsworn positions over the past 10 years. The FTE related to enabling services purchased by Government from the AFP, has also increased by 23 in SRG and Canine and 32 across other enabling services.

More than half of the growth in the ACT Policing unsworn FTE derives from transferring unsworn members into operational support roles that were historically performed by police across a range of areas including Intelligence, Judicial Operations, Family Violence and Vulnerable People. This together with the introduction of PSOs into the ACT Watch House allows police to better shift their focus to frontline operational policing duties.

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

Signature: 

Date: 14/11/2022

By the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Mick Gentleman MLA