

Your local voice



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Mick Gentleman, MLA
Minister for Police and Emergency Services
ACT Government

31 January 2020

gentleman@act.gov.au

Dear Minister,

I am writing to you about reports Council has been receiving of anti-social motor vehicle use in the Weston Creek and Molonglo areas. While Council has been receiving a steady flow of complaints on this for as long as I can recall, of late the number and severity of the alleged behavior has been increasing. Our usual response has been to direct the complainant to ACT Policing with advice the person making the report provide as much detail as possible of the alleged offence.

This information has recently been reinforced through my regular column in the Chronicle and by ACT Policing, Sergeant Simon Coady, who attended our September public meeting and faced questions from community members about this issue.

Unfortunately, people who have made the recommended telephone call to report an example of anti-social driving they have (or are) witnessed are underwhelmed by the response to their report. The general theme is they come away feeling their complaint is unlikely to be acted on and they are unlikely to make another report. I am sure you will agree that for such a perception to exist in the community is entirely unacceptable.

Further, there has been some recent serious high-speed motor vehicles crashes in Weston Creek and Molonglo that have resulted in some serious, life-altering injuries being sustained by vehicle occupants. To allow this to continue cannot be consistent with the Government's Vision Zero Strategy.

Some examples of the complaints that have been brought to my attention include:

- High-speed driving by groups of vehicles along major arterial roads, perhaps as part of an organised event;
- Drivers using intimidating practices such as tailgating, horn blowing and yelling obscenities when following (slowed by) compliant vehicles;
- Excessive noise from loud exhausts and tyres losing traction on a regular basis, often of an evening in residential areas;
- Dangerous speeds in the high pedestrian activity areas around Cooleman Court;
- Close passes of pedestrians using pedestrian crossings and car parks;
- The solitary shared zone in the Northern Cooleman Court carpark being regularly disregarded;
- Drivers edging vehicles towards people using marked pedestrian crossings, presumably to encourage them to hasten their pace;
- Use of unregistered motorcycles on shared paths around local shopping centres, particularly Rivett and Holder; and
- Disregard of the school zone speed limits.

Council has just completed a Survey in our Weston Creek and Molonglo community and I have attached some comments from those who completed the survey. I am sure that you will find some of great concern.

Council is asking that you work with ACT Policing to ensure an effective strategy is devised to address this important community safety issue.

Council is happy to discuss this issue with you. Council could also set aside time at a future public meeting to allow you to hear from the community members about these issues.

I have also written to your colleague, Shane Rattenbury, Minister for Justice, Community Affairs and Road Safety on this matter.

With Best Wishes



Chair

Weston Creek Community Council

Attachment to the Letter on “hooning”

Please note that these comments are unedited.

Stop the hoons doing burnouts at the top of Hindmarsh/Darwinia

A buffer between the HOONS who use cotter road as there person dragstrip.

Chapman - more traffic reduction measures as Chapman is now a rat run between Belconnen and Tuggeranong

Lack of policing and increase in crime / antisocial driving which seems to have increased significantly in recent months and lack of police available when we call with concerns on antisocial driving

Please lobby the police to do something about the hoon drivers destroying our roads and being reckless

Hoon driving. People speeding in cars. Theft from houses and garages. cyclists cycling dangerously on share paths and tracks.

Policing is a big problem - we called 000 and it took over 20 minutes for the police to arrive

Speeding on main streets

A police station or more police patrolling Molonglo area. So much theft and vandalism and anti-social behaviour. Feel like I'm living in a slum now

Very concerned about dangerous driving/hooning/ drag racing

cars often do burnouts at the end of hindmarsh / darwinia / eucumbene drives near my home but never is anyone arrested for it. likewise, there is very antisocial behaviour and driving at weston tennis courts / skate park that never gets any police presence. some cameras should be set up at these hot spots so that bad drivers can be identified. very likely someone will be injured eventually by a car doing burnouts.

The anti social driving is a big problem. At least once a week we have a heap of cars (maybe from a club) that roar down Streeton Drive from Cooleman Court direction and they take a left up Cotter Road and roar up there. Sometimes it seem like they do laps. It so loud and they are travelling really fast.

We need to have something done about the racing that is undertaken almost everynight- lack of police.

Hooning around the streets

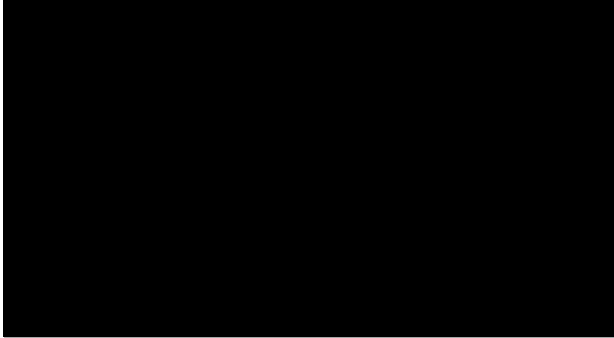
These comments are on the proposed 150 parking spaces off Parkinson St - *It is a terrible idea. It is not needed, you can always get a park. We must keep the green space, a carpark is against the cooling policy, it will attract litter, and be very ugly. **It will also attract hoons.** Built a multi story park on the other side of cooleman court.*



Mick Gentleman MLA

Minister for Advanced Technology and Space Industries
Minister for the Environment and Heritage
Minister for Planning and Land Management
Minister for Police and Emergency Services
Manager of Government Business

Member for Brindabella



Thank you for your email on 31 January 2020 regarding your community's concerns regarding ongoing hooning, dangerous driving and anti-social behaviours in the areas of Weston Creek and Molonglo. Both ACT Policing and I take the safety of members in our community seriously. Canberra is a very safe city in which to live where the vast majority of ACT residents are law-abiding. However, like other cities around Australia and the world, we are not immune to criminal activity and the small number of members within our community who chose to do the wrong thing.

I have forwarded a copy of your correspondence to the Officers-in-Charge of Woden Police Station and ACT Policing Traffic Operations for their information. I am advised that ACT Policing will continue to target anti-social and dangerous road use along public roads as operational priorities allow as they are aware of this issue.

ACT Policing is a 24-hour service and will attend to reports of illegal road use at any time of the day. Safety on our roads is of the utmost importance. The ACT Government and ACT Policing are committed to keeping Canberrans safe on our roads. ACT Policing makes all efforts to enforce the road rules but this is a shared responsibility with all our community. With over 3000 kilometres of public roads throughout the Territory, ACT Policing must spread their enforcement resources efficiently. This means that whilst ACT Policing has a significant presence on our roads, they cannot be everywhere all the time. This is why information from the community, like that provided by you, is crucial in identifying problematic areas and the times those issues are occurring. This information helps ACT Policing to better assess, prioritise and direct resources to incidents.

ACT Policing is intelligence-informed, and uses information to prioritise and direct its workforce to best serve the people of Canberra. ACT Policing deploys resources flexibly to ensure an appropriate police response to target and disrupt those seeking to cause harm in all suburbs in the Canberra community.

Public safety is a primary concern for ACT Policing. ACT Policing does not encourage members of the public to place themselves at risk to obtain information of criminal offending. However, where it is safe to do so, information provided by witnesses can be of significant assistance to police.

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MickGentleman



Details of vehicles and individuals involved in driving offences are extremely helpful to police and while information can be provided anonymously, a public willingness to provide information greatly enhances ACT Policing's ability to take action. Information provided to Crime Stoppers is sent to ACT Policing Intelligence for collation and analysis to further inform police of crime and issues that are occurring.

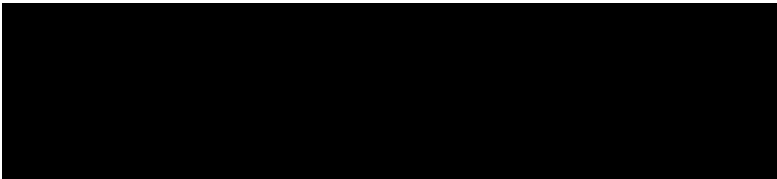
I strongly recommend that you continue to encourage members of your community to report suspicious or unacceptable behaviours to Crimestoppers on 1800 333 000 or online via www.act.crimestoppers.com.au. Should they have any immediate concerns for their safety, they should contact police on 131 444 or, in emergency or life threatening situations, call Triple-Zero (000).

The ACT Government is serious about combating crime within our community and this is evident given the announcement of a \$33.9 million investment in ACT Policing to transition to a community focused policing model, which will see increased efforts at preventing and disrupting crime before it occurs. This funding includes recruitment for over 60 positions over four years. This marks the first step towards a new community focused model of policing, which will centre on operationalising intelligence, building proactive policing capacity and growing community engagement capabilities.

As part of this investment in ACT Policing, the ACT Government is funding new tools and technology for our police officers, which will equip them to be more mobile, agile and digitally engaged with the community. These investments demonstrate the Government's commitment to ensuring ACT Policing is funded and equipped to ensure Canberra remains a safe place to live.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely



Minister for Police and Emergency Services

25/2/2020

Shane Rattenbury MLA



Member for Kurrajong

Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability
Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety
Minister for Corrections and Justice Health
Minister for Mental Health

[REDACTED]
Chair, Weston Creek Community Council

Dear [REDACTED]

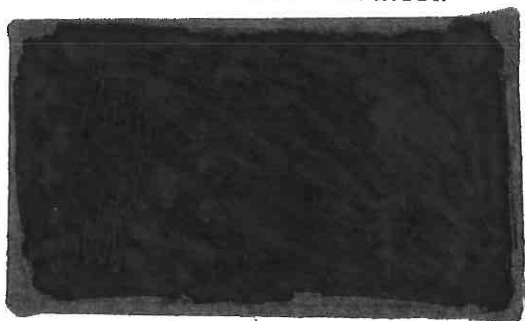
Hooning in Weston Creek and Molonglo

Thank you for writing to me about 'hooning' issues in the Weston Creek and Molonglo area. I agree with you that this is a problem that needs addressing, and I note Minister Gentleman has replied to you about actions being taken by the ACT Government and ACT Policing in particular. As the Road Safety Minister, I have responsibility for broad road safety policy, and for road rules. These policies and rules are clear that 'hooning' activities – such as speeding, drag racing, burnouts and other dangerous driving – are not acceptable and they attract significant penalties.

Unfortunately, people do continue to break the rules, and it is difficult to prevent in all circumstances. In these instances the best approach is to try to report offenders to local police, or to call Crime Stoppers. As Minister Gentleman has noted, the local police will be reminded about the issues you have reported.

As Road Safety Minister I also promote policies that improve the safe and easy movement around local neighbourhoods, such as slower speeds, pedestrian crossings, public transport, and accessible footpaths. As you are aware, in recent years, the Government has funded 'age friendly suburbs' improvements in Weston Creek, as well as taken other steps to improve safety and movement, such as introducing a 40kmh zone in Brierly Street (as part of a roll out of slower speeds to all town and group centres).

Thank you for writing to me about this issue. I would be interested in hearing an update on your concerns the next time we meet.



MAR 2020

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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Some free text comments received for Weston Creek women's safety survey

(survey closed 21/10/2022)

- Weston Creek is 50 year old and deserves a stationery police presence. Please put a small Police station/presence in at Cooleman Court.
- I am not confident that the MLAs will do anything practical about the issue. I am tired of hearing platitudes that are not backed up by real action.
- More patrolling of police in the neighbourhood, as before-improve lighting on foot and cycle paths, safe school crossings, provision of off road cycle paths to feel safe when cycling, provide overpasses for walking and cycling over busy roads. Provide "wombat" safety crossings on busy roads so cars have to slow down for people to cross safely, have signs "slow down- kids, elderly" displayed in streets with no footpaths to make it safer to walk on road.
- Physical barriers to prevent cars accessing ovals.
- Good lighting, footpaths and cycle paths to be well maintained, off road cycle paths as safety concerns to ride on road.
- active policing and a local police station; green space being monitored and complaints about trades accessing areas through children's parks and greenways where they should not be; removal of traffic bollards and gates being investigated
- more programs and better process for repeat offending criminals, particularly around car theft and hooning.
- hoons in cars, lack of police presence in area.

**Some free text comments received for Weston Creek Council's priorities survey
(conducted July 2022)**

- A police station for Molonglo-Weston Creek.
- Increased police presence in the Weston Creek and Molonglo Valley areas.
- Road speed limits.
- Traffic speeds and associated noise. What can we do locally to meet Active Travel, Air Quality, and Ageing in Place.
- Policing.
- How to strengthen the influence of the community over government policies and actions.
- Crime and hooligans - We were away recently and someone broke into our car (up a long driveway) and took a small container of coins and while it's not the theft that concerns me, it is the fact that they could brazenly enter a property. Also, the amount of hoons leaving rubber on the roads from burnouts is very concerning. This needs more focus because it's so dangerous and as someone who walks regularly, it feels unsafe walking the streets.
- I would like to see the Commissioner or ACT Policing come and speak about policing, crime etc in the Weston Creek area.
- Concern about joy riding and the dangers to the community. There is fear in the community that further accidents will happen.
- Yes also crime seems to be pretty bad at the moment with vehicle theft and break ins.