



Inquiry into annual and financial reports 2024–2025

Answer to question taken on notice

Asked by: Mr Thomas Emerson MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services

In relation to: Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Police social media moderation guidelines

Hearing: 20 November 2025

Uncorrected Proof Transcript p 67

Transcript provided: 27/11/2025

Answer Due: 04/12/2025

MR EMERSON: Thank you. Yes, so on the same incident, after the correct suspect was arrested on Wednesday evening ACT Policing issued a statement on social media about the arrest, which included just one line about what had happened on the bus earlier, which we have been discussing today, which was, “Police stopped a Transport Canberra bus after receiving information that the teenager was on board, but he was not able to be located.” And that is the extent of that. Do you accept that that statement grossly misrepresented what had occurred?

[...]

Deputy Commissioner Lee: Yes, I do not think it provides a fulsome understanding of the circumstances of the misidentification, so I do accept that, yes, yes.

MR EMERSON: Thank you for that. Community members agreed, and so they wrote comments under the post that sought to clarify what had occurred earlier. They were all deleted though. The remaining comments reflect positively on the efforts on the day, saying things like, “Great work. Once again, diligent and excellent work by ACT Policing.” Why were those comments deleted? And is there a procedure or policy somewhere that we can refer to, to understand that?

Deputy Commissioner Lee: Yes, there is. So I know you raised that with us previously, so we have sought to identify those posts. The posts are not deleted, but they are hidden from others who can see the chat. Certainly to date we have not been able to identify those posts that have been hidden from that stream. It is on the basis where, the way the search occurs, apparently we need a username or something like that. So our media team have looked at it. They have looked over the last day or so, but cannot identify those specific posts that are being referred to. But there are policies that we do have in terms of how we moderate that stream. And basically it is in line with sort of community guidelines around where there may be, you know, racist comments, profanity, those sorts of things, where those posts will be hidden. Certainly where there is either positive commentary or criticism of ACT Policing, we do not hide those posts. But certainly I am happy to provide the committee with further detail on that guidance or those guidelines, if that would assist.

OFFICIAL

DR MARISA PATERSON MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

ACT Policing values open communication where the community feels safe expressing their thoughts and opinions on the ACT Policing Facebook page, however comments that are in breach of the ACT Policing Facebook Community Guidelines are moderated by ACT Policing.

These guidelines are clearly visible on the ACT Policing Facebook page.

ACT Policing uses a combination of automated and human moderation for Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. Comments made to ACT Policing on X/Twitter cannot be moderated.

Inappropriate language meant to harass, threaten, defame or abuse an individual or specific groups is not welcome on the page and will be hidden or deleted.

Similarly, threatening, abusive and violent language regarding race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, political beliefs or other targeted groups will also be hidden or deleted.

The use of swear words or phrases are generally caught by automated monitoring and are hidden soon after they are posted.

Comments that are hidden can still be seen by the original commentor and their immediate friends. Hidden comments make up the majority of moderated comments on ACT Policing's pages.

Comments that are deleted are relatively few – and generally link to spam or other sites, or include unacceptable content.

ACT Policing will permanently ban anyone from the ACT Policing Facebook page who repeatedly breach these guidelines. Once an account is identified as legitimate, direct engagement with that person occurs prior to any banning action being taken.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Legal Affairs

Signature:

M. Paterson

Date:

5/12/25

By the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services, Dr Marisa Paterson MLA