



**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**  
**QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Michael Pettersson MLA: To ask the Attorney-General

**Output 3.1 Courts and Tribunal**

1. What workplace arrangements were in place for Sheriff's Officers during the recent COVID-19 lockdown period?
2. Did the duties of Sheriff's Officers change during the recent COVID-19 lockdown period?
  - a) If so, how?
3. How is the ACT Government Union Encouragement Policy implemented in the Sheriff's Office??

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

1. The Sheriff's Officers were classified as essential workers, and as such were expected to be available for work during the recent lockdown period. Sheriff's Officers were rostered and allocated duties in a variety of areas, dependent on the needs of the court.

To minimise COVID 19 risks, Sheriff's Officers were provided with masks, hand sanitizer, shields and gloves to use during their work day. In addition, only Sheriff's Office staff were allowed access to their area and Sheriff's Office staff were directed to reduce their visits to other areas of the court precinct.

Social distancing measures were enforced, both in the Sheriff's Office and the wider court precinct.

Once a Sheriff's Officer had finished their allocated duties, if there was no other work to be undertaken that day, they were sent home so as to reduce their risk of exposure to COVID 19.

2. Yes. Some duties were ceased and some new duties were undertaken.

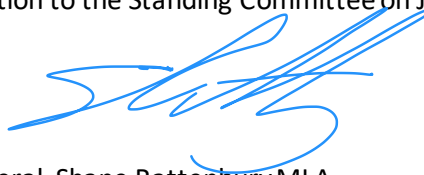
In particular, all enforcement (road) work was ceased and Sheriff's Officers were redeployed to other essential work to assist with ensuring COVID safe measures were in place throughout the Court precinct. These redeployed duties included:

- Staffing the Courts concierge desk.  
Court attendees were required to report to the concierge desk before they were allowed entrance into the court. This triaging served as an enquiry point and ensured that; no person without business before the Court gained entry to the building; members of the public checked into the building; and other screening tools to ensure COVID safe practices.

- Assisting with social distancing arrangements.  
Sheriff's Officers were responsible for assisting in the A1 (large volume criminal list) and A2 (bail list) lists in the Magistrates Court. During the lockdown, the A1 list was separated between two courts, the Sheriff's Officers assisted by undertaking additional duties in the second court and run files and paperwork between the two courts.
  - Assisting with remote appearances.  
To enhance social distancing in the Court precinct members of the public who were required before the court, but did not have the means to appear remotely, could attend in the remote witness suite or other remote locations within the Court building. Sheriff's Officers assisted in these remote suites.
  - Assisting with security duties.  
When security staff were short staffed due to the need for staff to attend for COVID testing, Sheriff's Officers undertook the security duties.
  - Ad Hoc assistance with court room hygiene.  
At times, Sheriff's Officers undertook cleaning duties within the court room where they were rostered.
3. The ACT new Employee Information Pack is required to be completed by all new starters in the Sheriff's Office. This information Pack includes the Union Encouragement Policy. Union contact numbers and membership information is available to staff, if requested.

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

Signature:



Date: 15/11/21

By the Attorney General, Shane Rattenbury MLA