



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2024-2025

Ms Nicole Lawder MLA (Chair), Ms Suzanne Orr MLA (Deputy Chair),
Miss Laura Nuttall MLA

**ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE
DURING PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Asked by: Ms Suzanne Orr MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Redirected to:

Reference: Uncorrected Hansard Transcript [Page 9]

In relation to: Community outreach by police

Hearing Date: 2 August 2024

QTON lodgement date: 5 August 2024

Answer Due Date: 8 August 2024

MS ORR: Okay. Can I just get a bit of an overview as to what sort of outreach police are doing with the community? And as a result of this incident, what sort of outreach on an ongoing basis are you going to do particularly with African community but other communities that might feel that they need to improve that relationship?

Mr Lee: So we have a range of community engagement initiatives that are underway through ACT Policing. Certainly—now that can range from community engagement that occurs at a station level, with their local communities, local community leadership, which would be undertaken by our OICs of our police stations and our general duty staff on a day-to-day basis.

We have obviously also got a range of arrangements in place under our family violence and vulnerable persons portfolio, where we have liaison officers and community engagement teams who are also responsible for reaching out to communities, such as the First Nations community. Now obviously we will look at what more we need to do in consultation with the African community, other CALD communities are obviously subject parts of that engagement by our community engagement teams and our liaison officers.

Also we partner and sponsor with government and non-government organisations as well in terms of how we can sponsor specific community events. So there is a spectrum of what we may do there in terms of the engagement with those communities. We certainly have some more detail, if you like, that we are happy to—we are happy to provide you with some of that detail, in terms of what we are doing with some of those community engagement—with some of those non-government organisations in terms of how we can better engage with communities.

I might pass to—

THE CHAIR: Perhaps you could provide that on notice?

Mr Lee: I am happy to, Chair, if that would be easier?

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

ACT Policing understands the culturally diverse city Canberra is, and is committed to providing a policing service that is culturally sensitive and respectful to the many communities that make up the ACT.

Ensuring ACT Policing's outreach is also being demonstrated at a senior level, members of the Senior Executive attended Iftar for Ramadan in March 2024.

Community events such as the Canberra Multicultural Festival and Africa in the Park, along with smaller events such as "Coffee with a Cop" or "Cop Pop Up" sessions at shopping centres across the ACT are important opportunities for police to engage with all communities and become a more visible and in turn, trusted police service.

ACT Policing not only attends and hosts an interactive and engaging display at the Africa Party in the Park, but also helps sponsor the event, contributing \$5,000 to the event in 2024.

ACT Policing is always looking at how this type of face-to-face engagement can be expanded and will work with the community to improve its cultural literacy, including through more regularly scheduled meetings, and the identification of training opportunities for police.

ACT Policing attends many events hosted by different communities throughout each year. In the past financial year, some of these events have included:

- Sri Lankan Festival
- Eid events
- Aussie Peace Walk
- Happy Holi & Harmony Day Festival (Indian community)
- Punjabi Sports Day Migrant & Refugee Settlement Service World Refugee Day event.

Multicultural Liaison Officers

ACT Policing has two dedicated Multicultural Liaison Officer (MLO) roles within the Community and Education Team of the Vulnerable Persons portfolio – one police officer and one professional staff member. MLOs build and maintain relationships with multicultural community leaders throughout the ACT.

Through the MLO capability and broader community policing functions, ACT Policing is actively involved with community groups that represent the diversity of the ACT community.

MLO's work closely with the ACT Multicultural Hub who provides services to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers to access resources in the ACT, as well as connecting people with government services including accessing the National Disability Insurance Scheme, family violence support or Legal Aid.

MLOs also engage with the Canberra Multicultural Community Forum through attending monthly meetings, a peak body representing more than 100 ethnic and associated community organisations in the Australian Capital Territory and its surrounding area.

MLOs also network with various community contacts, and attending community events, as well as Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services, and the Migrant Youth Advocacy Network.

On 27 July 2024, MLO's attended an African Community Sports Day, participating in sports and games with the community.

On 3 August, MLO's attended the Welcome to Canberra Expo, which aims to give new arrivals to Canberra, the opportunity to meet ACT community organisations and services.

MLOs regularly provide informational presentations to newly arrived students to Canberra Institute of Technology, University of Canberra and Australian National University about ACT Policing and the role of Police in the ACT, numbers to call, where the police stations are located.

Every school holiday period, MLOs attend Multicultural Hub's School Holiday Program and engage with young people from a multicultural background while doing activities together.

In the broader engagement space, MLOs attend one-on-one visits with members of the ACT Culturally and Linguistically Diverse community to provide specific policing support dependent on their individual circumstances – for example meeting with Family Violence victims and support workers, to explain police processes and their rights and options.

Tuck Incident reaction

On Saturday, 13 July 2024, the Deputy Chief Police Officer met with representatives from the African Australian Advocacy Centre (AAAC) and the African Australian Council ACT (AACACT) to discuss community concerns that arose following an incident in Narrabundah.

During this meeting, they discussed how they could work together to improve relationships between the police and African people in Canberra. As a result, it was agreed that improving representation of African people within ACT Policing ranks, and of the broader AFP, is a shared goal.

A follow up meeting was held on Saturday, 27 July 2024 for community members unable to attend the 13 July 2024 meeting.

ACT Policing has committed to continue working together to give African communities opportunities to get to know their police better, and how to raise issues of concern with ACT Policing. ACT Policing is always looking at how this type of face-to-face engagement can be expanded.

In September 2024, MLOs will show ACT Policing support by attending the African Youth Soccer tournament.

In October 2024, the Community and Education Team is hosting an external program at Belconnen Police Station that involves fathers from the Kenyan Canberra Community and their sons aged 10-12 years old. This will include a presentation, Question & Answer session and showing them our police vehicles. Discussions for this event began in May 2024.

ACT Policing will also work with the African community to improve our cultural literacy, including through more regularly scheduled meetings, and the identification of training opportunities for police.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2024-2025

Signature: 

Date: 8/8/2024

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