

Ministerial Direction

This Direction is issued under section 7 of the Policing Arrangement between the Ministers of the Commonwealth and Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Governments, outlining the ACT Government's priorities and expectations for the Australian Federal Police (AFP), and more specifically the Chief Police Officer (CPO) of the ACT. This Direction is to be read in conjunction with the 2022-2026 Purchase Agreement between the ACT Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services, the AFP Commissioner and the CPO. It supersedes and revokes the Direction issued on 28 September 2022.

My primary expectation is that ACT Policing will continue to provide a professional, effective, and efficient policing service to the ACT community made up of a healthy, diverse and inclusive workforce with a balance of experience.

This should be achieved through evidence-based and innovative strategies to meet the outcomes of the 2022-2026 Purchase Agreement within appropriated resources to reduce crime, increase community safety and engage with the community partners locally and nationally.

ACT Policing should play a key role in implementing ACT Government initiatives through collaborative work with the Government and other community stakeholders. Some of these initiatives include raising the age of criminal responsibility, the decriminalisation of drugs of dependence and initiatives to address domestic, family and sexual violence. These initiatives will improve community safety; reduce harm and trauma; and help prevent, divert and improve outcomes for those interacting with the criminal justice system.

Key to delivering safety to the Canberra community is the ongoing recruitment of ACT Policing personnel. ACT Policing's current recruitment is to meet the 126 police personnel increase the ACT Government funded through the unprecedented commitment of \$107 million over five years announced in June 2023. I expect ACT Policing to work collaboratively with the ACT Government to deliver infrastructure for their policing workforce, which will support existing and incoming personnel.

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EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY POLICING)

- In line with ACT Government's significant investment in funding of more police for the ACT, that ACT Policing continue a prevention and community-focused model of policing that supports ACT Government priorities for the community.
- Enhance the capability and community presence of ACT Policing to prevent, detect and respond to crime. Foster community engagement and trust for intelligence collection and encourage community members to report crime.
- Enhance digital engagement capabilities and technology to ensure ACT Policing continues to evolve in line with community expectations.

In the current environment, the expected focus areas for ACT Policing are:

PROFESSIONALISM AND PRACTICES OF POSITIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Build trust through community engagement and continuous improvement, fostering a responsible and accountable police service which promotes ethical conduct and ongoing training and professional development for ACT Police Officers including cultural competence training, de-escalation techniques.
- Take actions to improve professional practices and reducing professional standards issues. This includes the establishment and promotion of clear and accessible procedures for handling complaints, ensuring they are investigated thoroughly and impartially.

CRIME PREVENTION

- Collaborate with partner agencies and the community in crime prevention through a focus on dynamic policing presence in key crime areas and for key crime types.
- Continue to work on strategies for early intervention for people at risk of engaging with the criminal justice system, assist with the development of diversion options to redirect offenders away from the formal criminal justice process into programs that address underlying issues that lead to offending, and reducing recidivism to enhance the safety of the ACT community.

IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

- Continue to work collaboratively with partner agencies and the community to ensure victims of family and domestic violence are identified, supported, and empowered, while holding offenders accountable for their unlawful conduct. Support the development of the Domestic and Family Violence Investigation Unit (DFVIU) through recruitment and specialist training including coercive control and technology-assisted abuse.
- Focus prevention on high-harm crime, in particular domestic, family, and sexual violence.

IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSES

- Prioritise an effective response to sexual violence. This will include working with the ACT Government to implement recommendations in the ACT Government's response to the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Steering Committee's recommendations in the *Listen, Take Action to Prevent, Believe and Heal* report and the ACT Sexual Assault (Police) Review Report".
- Continue to review and improve ACT Policing's operational response to sexual violence that is trauma informed and person centred.

ADDRESS DANGEROUS DRIVING AND REDUCE ROAD TRAUMA

- Support the ACT Government to address dangerous driving in both prevention and post-incident response.
- Take action to improve road safety, with an emphasis on reducing road trauma experienced by vulnerable road users and combating anti-social and dangerous driving behaviours, including speeding and driving while impaired or distracted.

REDUCING THE OVERREPRESENTATION OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

- To support the ACT Government's goals as set out in *RR25by25 and Beyond: A Justice Reinvestment Strategy for the ACT*, the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028, including targets to reduce recidivism and the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system, ACT Policing will:
 - o support implementation of any recommendations relevant to ACT Policing arising from the Independent Review into First Nations Overrepresentation and continue working with the First Nations community to identify and implement approaches to reduce over-representation in the criminal justice system;
 - o implement initiatives that are based on trust and culturally competent and responsive policing to improve engagement with the First Nations community in the ACT, including cultural competence training for ACTP Officers;
 - o continue implementation of the ACT Policing engagement framework through consultation and partnerships with the ACT's First Nations community.
 - o continue to strengthen the Chief Police Officer's Advisory Board's engagement with First Nations people in the ACT and continued focus on the importance of the role of First Nations Liaison Officers in diverting First Nations people away from the criminal justice system; and
 - o Work with partners within Government and the community on reducing contact with the criminal justice system and contribute to increased early intervention and diversion strategies for youth and adults.

RAISING THE AGE OF CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Support the ACT Government's priority reform to raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility through continued engagement with key ACT Government Directorates to support a therapeutic response to supporting young people in crisis.

DRUG DECRIMINALISATION AND HARM MINIMISATION

- Support the ACT Government's harm minimisation approach to drug policy where drug use is seen as a health issue rather than a criminal justice issue. Continue to reflect and support the guiding principles under the *National Drug Strategy 2017-2026*, by reducing the harms from drug use, as well as reducing supply through enforcement.
- Drive initiatives that strengthen the community's resilience to drug distribution networks and focus on seizing wealth derived from these criminal activities.

COMMUNITY SAFETY FOCUSED FIREARMS APPROACH

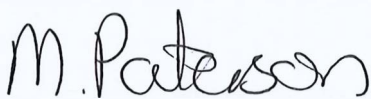
- Support the development of the National Firearms Register (NFR) and associated work to uplift the ACT Firearms Registry and review ACT firearms legislation, including through the provision of advice on the operational implications of key policy, legislation, business and technical changes.
- Collaborate with the ACT Government in the development and operationalisation of policy and law reform to ensure the regulatory regime for firearms remains fit for purpose and that police have access to the tools necessary to respond effectively to risks to community safety.
- Continue the critical role of regulating compliance with firearms law and policy and promoting the safe and responsible possession and use of firearms.

COUNTERING TERRORISM AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

- Continue to support the ACT Government's efforts to counter violent extremism in line with national strategies.
- Maintain a fixated threat capability to meet the Government's obligations under the October 2017 Council of Australian Governments agreement.
- Continue to work with government and industry to strengthen the safety of the ACT's public places and major events in line with national strategies and best practice.

I acknowledge the important work of ACT Policing in continuing to work with the broader law enforcement community in preventing and disrupting serious and organised crime that threatens the community.

I acknowledge the dynamic and complex environment that ACT Policing staff work in. I will continue to work with the Justice and Community Safety Directorate and the community to support ACT Policing to disrupt and prevent crime and ensure the ACT remains one of the safest cities to live.



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

26 September 2025