



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AFFAIRS

(Reference: [Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2024-25](#))

Members:

MS C BARRY (Chair)
MR T WERNER-GIBBINGS (Deputy Chair)
MR S RATTENBURY

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

TUESDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2025

Secretary to the committee:
Ms K de Kleuver (Ph: 6207 0524)

By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

Submissions, answers to questions on notice and other documents, including requests for clarification of the transcript of evidence, relevant to this inquiry that have been authorised for publication by the committee may be obtained from the Legislative Assembly website.

APPEARANCES

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Amended 20 May 2013

The committee met at 3.45 pm

Appearances:

Paterson, Dr Marisa, Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services, Minister for Women, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence, Minister for Corrections and Minister for Gaming Reform

Infrastructure Canberra

Geraghty, Ms Gillian, Director-General

Cahif, Mr Ashley, Deputy Director-General

Bell, Mrs Hayley, Executive Group Manager, Delivery–Health, Education and Justice

THE CHAIR: Good afternoon, and welcome to the public hearings of the Standing Committee on Legal Affairs for its inquiry into annual and financial reports for 2024-25. The committee will today hear from the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services.

The committee wishes to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land we are meeting on, the Ngunnawal people. We wish to acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of the city and this region. We would also like to acknowledge and welcome other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who may be attending today's event.

This hearing is a legal proceeding of the Assembly and has the same standing as proceedings of the Assembly itself. Therefore, today's evidence attracts parliamentary privilege. The giving of false or misleading evidence is a serious matter and may be considered contempt of the Assembly. The hearing is being broadcast, recorded and transcribed by Hansard, and will be published. The proceedings are also being broadcast and webstreamed live. When taking a question on notice, it would be useful if witnesses use these words, "I will take that question on notice." This will help the committee and witnesses to confirm questions taken on notice from the transcript.

We welcome Dr Marisa Paterson MLA, Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services. and officials from Infrastructure Canberra. Please note that, as witnesses, you are protected by parliamentary privilege and bound by its obligations. You must tell the truth, as giving false or misleading evidence could be considered contempt of the Assembly.

As we are not inviting opening statements, we will now proceed to questions. I will hand over to Ms Morris to ask the first question.

MS MORRIS: I have some questions on the city police station and the recent sewage contamination. Do we have an update on that? Has the situation been contained?

Dr Paterson: The situation was contained and, over Saturday morning, cleaned, and the station was up and running again.

MS MORRIS: With detainees back in place?

Dr Paterson: Yes.

MS MORRIS: Can you talk us through how the flooding happened in the first place? What was the fault?

Mr Cahif: This incident arose due to some work on the light rail system. A temporary bypass sewerage system was put in place. Unfortunately, there was a failure of the pumps and a failure of the telemetry which notifies the failure of the pumps. Both of those occurred.

When the incident was reported through the police station, then to Icon Water and Canberra Metro, a person went down to manually restart the backup pumps, and that fixed it. As I said, this was temporary, so the fix for that going forward was that someone was there to man that station 24/7 until it was switched over to the main, which I understand has happened. The temporary facility is no longer in use.

MS MORRIS: When we have had previous sewage and flooding in the city police station, were they for completely separate reasons to what you have just outlined?

Mr Cahif: Yes.

MS MORRIS: It is still currently being manned?

Mr Cahif: No. My understanding—and I will confirm that—is that the temporary solution is no longer there, and we are back with the main sewer.

MS MORRIS: It is not a concern with flooding happening again?

Mr Cahif: No.

MS MORRIS: All contained and done, moving forward? That is good. Can you talk a bit about the process of how, when a flooding incident like that happens, detainees and staff are relocated?

Dr Paterson: That is probably a question for Thursday, with police. The Chief Police Officer will be able to talk about what actions they put in place to keep everyone safe overnight and move everyone back the next day.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: With the feasibility study, business case, for the ACT Policing headquarters and the city police station, what is the progress? Where is that process up to?

Dr Paterson: A great question. A request for expression of interest went out earlier this year; it closed in August. There was strong interest from the community. The results of that expression of interest are now being worked into a business case that is being prepared for consideration by cabinet. That will happen as part of the midyear budget review.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: How is this happening in terms of procurement models?

What are you using or what are the models that are being explored for the new Policing infrastructure—either the headquarters and the city police station, both, or one or the other?

Ms Bell: We had everything on the table through a range of different options that we have considered—a traditional government build, own, maintain and operate model, PPP models, leasing models, and any variation in between that people could come up with. All of those have been modelled and presented for the government to inform their decision-making.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: That is part of the decision process that will be—when did you say?

Dr Paterson: In the budget review process.

Mr Cahif: Could I give an update on my previous answer? My understanding was incorrect. The temporary sewerage is still being done; it is still being manned 24/7. We are working to remove it by the end of the week.

MS MORRIS: Okay. Can I confirm whether it is safe for staff onsite?

Mr Cahif: Yes.

MS MORRIS: No contamination; has there been any assessment of that?

Dr Paterson: It is a bypass—sewage out of the main sewerage system, while they do the works for light rail. Following the incident, the site has been manned 24/7, to make sure that it does not affect any buildings or the police station.

MS MORRIS: Thank you for that clarification.

MR RATTENBURY: Can I seek an update on the status of the Casey joint emergency services station project?

Dr Paterson: Yes. The early works were funded in the last budget, at around \$11 million. That will see two years to support early civil construction works at that block. The government is working through the range of different users for that site—in particular, ESA and Health, as well as a potential other community facility there. There is also money allocated in the budget, \$1.9 million over three years, for the planning and design of the Casey ESA station. That will progress over the next three years.

MR RATTENBURY: If a design and final site use have not been determined, how do the early works happen? Presumably, the building early works go to some plan.

Ms Bell: There has been a subdivision progressed that has earmarked each of the zones that would be used for the ESA and the health centre that are proposed for that precinct. Both of those projects have a level of design that will inform those early works.

MR RATTENBURY: Is the third part of that site still set aside for community use?

Ms Bell: That is my understanding, yes.

MS CARRICK: My question is about the Molonglo police station. I understand it is part of the Molonglo town centre planning. Do you have any involvement with working with the SLA about the planning, and where is that up to?

Dr Paterson: There are continuing discussions with SLA and the City and Environment Directorate around a potential site for a police station. That will continue, as they plan and progress the town centre as a whole.

MS CARRICK: I understand that that plan will come out early next year. That is pretty soon; presumably, there must be a site identified.

Ms Bell: I believe that is the timing. I could not commit SLA to their timing, but we are working very closely with them and consulting with Policing to make sure that any site that is considered has been informed.

Dr Paterson: It will happen in close consultation with Policing, and the process will be in train and with discussions around what may be a Molonglo police station site. With the budgeted initiative around understanding the Woden patrol zone and what that will look like for the Molonglo patrol zone, that will also inform the size of the site and what ACT police need.

THE CHAIR: Has there been any call for infrastructure audits after the JLL master plan? Have you done a whole-of-policing infrastructure audit?

Ms Bell: Asset management sits with—

Dr Paterson: That is a question for ACT police, in the Thursday hearing—that asset management plan. That is how all the different police assets are maintained. That is a question for Thursday.

THE CHAIR: Okay. In 2022, there were issues with the cladding in Woden Police Station and JLL indicated that it is approaching end of life. That is not for this hearing, either?

Dr Paterson: No. Molonglo, Acton, Casey, city police station—these are all Infrastructure Canberra.

THE CHAIR: For the city police station, it was indicated that that is approaching end of life. Is there a plan for a new police station?

Dr Paterson: Yes, there is very much a plan for a new city police station—new city police headquarters. That goes to Mr Werner-Gibbings' question. We had the request for expressions of interest from industry to present some possible solutions. That ran over a few months, earlier this year. That will now inform a business case that will go to cabinet for consideration of next steps.

THE CHAIR: The headquarters and city police station are one business case or two separate business cases?

Dr Paterson: One business case, but there could be a range of different solutions. They could still be separate builds or they could be in one building. It just depends.

THE CHAIR: Is it the intention that you would move Winchester from Belconnen to city police, to be the headquarters? Is that the plan?

Dr Paterson: We are considering the options for a new city police station and new headquarters. There are a range of different options and plans which are a matter for cabinet consideration.

THE CHAIR: You have not made a decision as to whether it will be in the city or anywhere else; that is the consideration that is going to cabinet?

Dr Paterson: Yes.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: There are a number of major emergency services infrastructure projects currently underway. What is their status? Where are we up to on each of them?

Dr Paterson: The major one completed is Acton station. We saw that completed earlier this year, and that is now open and operational. All reviews from staff at the facility are that this is an excellent facility, and state of the art; the location is amazing, in terms of being able to get to incidents across the city.

The next one progressing is the Molonglo ESA station. The progress has been very good on that station. Again, that will be a large facility that will house Fire & Rescue and ACTAS. Again, based on the design and learnings from Acton, Molonglo is the next-stage iteration of best practice, in terms of ESA stations. As we touched on in answer to Mr Rattenbury's question, there are the works for Casey ESA station. That work is beginning as well.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: What is the government's approach, noting the status of these projects and that there will be more coming through, as the city grows et cetera? What is the government's process for ensuring that the long-term planning is best practice for the community, with the safety infrastructure that will be coming down the pipeline or is planned?

Ms Bell: It might be one for JACS, Minister. I do not know whether you have a session with them. They are responsible for the strategic asset management plan.

Dr Paterson: Yes. It is long-term, whole-of-ACT planning for all these facilities. This is part of the works going on with Casey. Gungahlin will become a police station and ESA will be moved out. These are things that involve the overarching strategic plans of the agencies involved.

Some of the work that will go on with the Molonglo station design work is around how that will complement Woden and what the future of the Woden patrol zone looks like. These are active conversations, as to where the focus is now. Overarching strategic plans and visions are probably best left until Thursday.

MR RATTENBURY: I want to come back to the new Acton station, which has now been completed. Have there been any defect issues arising out of that construction?

Ms Bell: There have been some, but none that have impacted operations. There were some technical elements around some of the mechanical engineering and fire systems that were tripping the system, but we were able to put a workaround in place. There has been nothing of a major nature that has impacted operations.

MR RATTENBURY: Do you have a final reconciliation for the cost of the project at this point?

Ms Bell: I will take that one on notice.

MR RATTENBURY: Can you remind me of what the original budget figure was for the project?

Dr Paterson: \$40.3 million.

MS CARRICK: My question is about access for police, fire and emergency vehicles. As the city grows and we reach 750,000 to 800,000 people, are you concerned about what will happen if we do not futureproof Adelaide Avenue and the Commonwealth Avenue Bridge with a lane that is accessible for these vehicles to be able to move from north to south?

Dr Paterson: Do you mean while the construction works happen?

MS CARRICK: No, in the future—in the longer term. Is anyone looking at opportunities to have a T2 or a lane through there so that emergency vehicles can slip between the north and the south when they need to?

Ms Geraghty: I suggest that that might be a question for Transport Canberra and the City and Environment Directorate.

Dr Paterson: I can answer that there are no plans that I am aware of for a direct emergency services lane down Adelaide Avenue.

MS CARRICK: I do not mean just for emergency services, but a T2 or bus lane; you could access it, so that you are not stuck in traffic on Commonwealth Avenue Bridge, for example.

Dr Paterson: That would be for Transport Canberra.

MS CARRICK: Okay. Do you talk with Transport Canberra and say, “Maybe this would be handy for emergency vehicles”?

Dr Paterson: It depends on what the services want. You can ask them on Thursday. They meet regularly with other agencies and directorates. In all planning processes, for light rail or the future construction of roads, our Emergency Services Agency are part of the discussion and consideration, to ensure their continuity of service across the city.

THE CHAIR: We will wrap up this session early. On behalf of the committee, I thank you for your attendance today. If you have taken any questions on notice, please provide your answers to the committee secretary within five business days of receiving the uncorrected proof *Hansard*.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank all of you for assisting us today. If a member wishes to ask questions on notice, please upload them to the parliamentary portal as soon as possible, and no later than five business days from today. This meeting is now adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 4.05 pm