

Securing Our Community



Canberra**liberals**

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The Canberra Liberals recognise that community safety and crime prevention are matters that rank highly with the Canberra community. The Canberra Liberals believe that, with a carefully targeted increase in funding, it will be possible to put additional sworn police officers into the community while boosting community-based efforts to reduce the incidence of crimes and anti-social behaviour.

The Stanhope Legacy

The Stanhope Government has failed to be open with the Canberra community about how many police officers there are in the ACT. Despite repeated calls for precise details of how many sworn and unsworn police officers there are working in ACT Policing, the Stanhope Government has steadfastly refused to provide this information.

Instead, the Stanhope Government continues to claim that it has added an extra 122 officers to ACT Policing over seven years (although the official numbers of police officers given in various ACT Policing annual reports does not support this claim). The Canberra Liberals finds it difficult to understand the lack of openness and accountability by the Stanhope Government on police staff numbers.

The Stanhope Government also has not told the truth about the staffing for a police presence in Gungahlin. The Stanhope Government reduced the Gungahlin Police Station from a 24 hour operation to a part time operation. Reluctantly, and in a pre-election decision, the Stanhope Government has now agreed to re-open the Gungahlin Police Station on a full time basis from January 2009.

Police Officers Numbers

The latest comparison of the number of sworn police officers in all jurisdictions shows that the ACT has the lowest number of sworn police officers in Australia.

Under the Stanhope Government, the ACT had 189 sworn police officers per 100,000, with the next lowest jurisdiction being Victoria at 211 per 100,000. This data is set out in the following table.

**Sworn Police Officers per 100,000
2005-06**

State	No. of officers	Number per 100,000
NSW	14,634	214
Vic	10,762	211
Qld	9,027	223
SA	3,975	256
WA	4,979	243
Tas	1,184	242
NT	877	424
ACT	620	189

Source: ABS, Year Book, 2008

More Officers on the Front Line

The Canberra Liberals commit to training and employing an additional 10 sworn police officers. We will ensure that this is a real increase on current numbers after taking into account any attrition in numbers because of retirements and resignations. The cost of this commitment is around \$1 million per year.

The additional funds that will be committed to the police policy will total around \$1 million per year, commencing in 2009-10.

	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
Additional 10 sworn officers		1,000	1,030	1,070

These funds will provide an increase in police numbers, pending further assessment of our future police needs.

Audit of Police Staff

Given the uncertainty over the number of people who are employed in ACT Policing, the Canberra Liberals also will undertake a comprehensive audit of the numbers of police officers – sworn and unsworn – to establish precisely the current position and the trend in numbers both categories of officers. This audit will be completed within existing resources.

Once the audit of police numbers has been completed, we will be in a position to consider any further additions to police resources beyond the initial addition of 10 sworn officers.

Reporting of Police Numbers

As part of the commitment of the Canberra Liberals to open and accountable reporting, we will provide an analysis of the number of police officers, sworn and unsworn, in each quarterly report provided to the Legislative Assembly.

Community Crime Prevention

The father of modern policing Sir Robert Peel once observed that “The community are the police and the police are the community”. Neighbourhood cooperation and awareness can be invaluable in helping police in their work gathering evidence against criminals.

Neighbourhood Watch and a number of other organisations do a great job, but are stretched for resources.

The Canberra Liberals believe that Neighbourhood Watch is a valuable component of the overall crime prevention activity that is undertaken by the community in association with the police.

The Canberra Liberals will commit \$50,000 a year to reinvigorating Neighbourhood Watch.

We will also commit \$250,000 for crime prevention and crime recovery programs for a range of community groups.

This will assist services like safety houses, RecLink, SupportLink, VOCAL and various neighbourhood based or regional community groups. This funding will assist organisations that encourage members of the Canberra community to be active in crime prevention, diversion and assisting the victims of crime.

This support stands in contrast to the policy-on-the-run approach of the Stanhope Government which announced its law and order policy one day with no money for Neighbourhood Watch, then backflipped the next day with a promise of just \$20,000. Labor has only shown an interest in Neighbourhood Watch after copping criticism for its ongoing lack of support for the organisation.


	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
Additional 10 sworn officers		1,000	1,030	1,070
Neighbourhood Watch		50	50	50
Community Crime Prevention and Recovery		250	250	250

This new funding represents a very significant boost to the resources involved in community crime prevention activities.

Planning for the Future

The Canberra Liberals will also:

- develop, in association with ACT Policing, a strategy for building on the existing community policing model to bring a stronger police presence into the community;
- evaluate the activities that are required of the police with respect to preparing for and taking matters to court and examine reasonable options for reducing this workload;
- we will incorporate a 'community compact' in the Agreement with the Australian Federal Police to provide appropriate policing services for the needs of the ACT; and
- we will establish, in consultation with ACT Policing, the strategic requirements for resources over the next 10 years.



In developing a longer term strategy for policing resources for the ACT, the Canberra Liberals will consult with ACT Policing, the Australian Federal Police Association and with various groups within the community – such as business organisations, community councils and schools – to identify needs related to crime prevention and to develop strategies to respond to these needs.